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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE: GEORGIA CONSULTATIONS, APRIL 14

¶1. (U) This is an action message. USUN may draw from the points in para 2 below during consultations on Georgia on April 14.

¶2. (U) Begin points.

-- The U.S. welcomes the Secretary General's report and appreciates efforts by UNOMIG and the Special Representative of the Secretary General to enhance stability and security in the Abkhazia region of Georgia and to facilitate dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

-- We also strongly welcome the new initiatives put forward by the Georgian President for the resolution of the conflict.

These far-reaching initiatives include representation for the Abkhaz at all levels of government, the new post of Vice President reserved exclusively for an Abkhaz representative, a veto over matters of policy pertaining to Abkhazia, the free development of the Abkhaz language, ethnicity, and culture, and a free economic zone in Gali and Ochamchira. We encourage the two sides to engage in a direct dialogue on these and other issues that could lead to a political resolution of the conflict.

-- We also strongly encourage both sides to implement without delay confidence building measures that would help establish an atmosphere of greater trust and understanding, which in turn could help lead to the resumption of political dialogue.

-- We have voiced our regret already that the Russian side has chosen to withdraw unilaterally from the 1996 decision by CIS Heads of State to impose economic and military sanctions on Abkhazia. We believe this will only set back the peace process and raise new concerns about military transparency in the region. We are encouraged that other CIS members have reaffirmed their commitment to upholding these sanctions.

-- In this connection we must note that despite some public speculation to the contrary, the return of internally displaced persons to Abkhazia has remained frozen, with over 200,000 internally displaced persons from Abkhazia alone still unable to return to their homes.

-- We hope that through more intensive consultations among the Friends we can encourage the sides to convene thematic working groups to discuss the issues where common ground may exist, including the implementation of confidence building measures that could potentially breathe new life into the peace process. While the sides must assume all responsibility for the deadlock in negotiations, there is hope that with greater focus and encouragement, the international community can help bring about the resumption of a much needed dialogue.

End points.
RICE